

Message Text

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INFO USDEL MBFR VIENNA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 USNATO 2151

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: AD HOC GROUP BRIEFING OF THE NAC APRIL 18

REF: MBFR VIENNA 190

BEGIN SUMMARY: NAC RECEIVED REGULAR BRIEFING FROM AHG ON APRIL 18 ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NEGOTIATION IN THREE WEEKS SINCE THE LAST BRIEFING AND ON THE NEGOTIATING ROUND JUST COMPLETED. PRINCIPAL AHG SPOKESMAN WAS BEHREND (FRG), ASSISTED BY ADRIAESSEN (BELGIUM) AND BRYNTESEN (NORWAY). BEHREND'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS FOLLOWED CLOSELY TEXT IN REFTEL. THE DISCUSSION CENTERED MAINLY ON POSSIBILITY IN NEXT ROUND OF EASTERN MOVE FOR DATA EXCHANGE, WHICH, ALTHOUGH OFFERING OPPORTUNITIES TO ALLIES, ALSO RAISED CERTAIN DANGERS. ERALP (TURKEY) MADE ANOTHER STRONG STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE TURKEY ATTACHES TO AGREEMENT ON GUIDANCE TO AHG ON FLANK SECURITY. END SUMMARY

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1. FEHREND IN HIS INTRODUCTORY REMARKS FOLLOWED CLOSELY THE TEXT OF REFTEL, WITH TWO ADDITIONS. FIRST, HE NOTED THAT THE WESTERN PRESS CONFERENCE THE PREVIOUS DAY HAD GONE SMOOTHLY, WITH NO HOSTILE QUESTIONS, WHILE STRULAK

AT THE EASTERN PRESS CONFERENCE RECEIVED SOME AWKWARD QUESTIONS, E.G. ON DATA, WHICH HE HAD TO DODGE. THE AHG WAS SATISFIED WITH THE PRESS CONFERENCES, AND THOUGHT THE WESTERN SIDE HAD COME ACROSS BETTER THAN THE EAST. SECOND, IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE NEGOTIATING ROUND, THE EAST GAVE CLEAR INDICATIONS THAT IN THE NEXT ROUND THEY WOULD MOVE TOWARD A DISCUSSION OF DATA, STARTING WITH DEFINITIONS, AND PROCEEDING TO FIGURES. IF THE EAST DOES MOVE TO A DISCUSSION OF DATA, THE NEED WILL PROBABLY ARISE FOR RAPID GUIDANCE FROM THE NAC, BUT IT IS TOO EARLY TO SAY WHAT KIND OF GUIDANCE IS NEEDED.

2. DE STAERCKE (BELGIUM) NOTED THE NEED FOR INTERNAL ALLIANCE WORK TO PREPARE THE TERRAIN IN THE EVENT OF SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS, AND HE REFERRED TO THE NEED FOR INTERNAL WORK ON OPTION III. HE SAID HE WANTED TO POINT OUT A PROBLEM THE ALLIES WILL FACE IN ANY DISCUSSION OF DATA WITH THE OTHER SIDE, I.E. THE LACK OF UNIFORMITY IN ALLIED PUBLIC REFERENCES TO DATA, AND THE TENDENCY OF THE ALLIES TO USE DIFFERENT FIGURES WHEN DEFENDING DIFFERENT THESES IN PUBLIC. HE SAID HE WANTED TO REFER IN PARTICULAR TO ARTICLES ON ALLIED DEFENSE IN THE APRIL 11 ISSUES OF ATLANTIC NEWS AND THE BRUSSELS TIMES. BOTH ARTICLES STATED THAT "NATO EXPERTS" IN BRUSSELS HAD REVISED PREVIOUS ESTIMATES, AND CONCLUDED THAT SOVIET CONVENTIONAL MILITARY STRENGTH IN EUROPE MAY NOT BE MUCH GREATER THAN NATO'S. SHORTLY AFTER APPEARANCE OF THESE ARTICLES, SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICER INQUIRED AT BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY ABOUT THEM.

3. BEHREND'S REPLIED THAT THE RUSSIANS FOLLOW CAREFULLY EVERYTHING PUBLISHED ON THIS POINT, AND THEIR FAVORITE GAME IS TO QUOTE WESTERN LEADERS IN AN ATTEMPT TO PROVE THAT GROUND FORCE DISPARITIES IN THE AREA OF REDUCTIONS ARE NOT SO GREAT. HE SAID THAT EASTERN WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS DATA IN THE NEXT NEGOTIATING ROUND COULD GIVE THE ALLIES MANY PROBLEMS. HIS GUESS WAS THAT THE EAST WILL SAY THAT IF THE TWO SIDES ARE TO DISCUSS DATA, THEY MUST DISCUSS ALL DATA, INCLUDING FORCE LEVELS OF EACH DIRECT PARTICIPANT, AS WELL AS NUCLEAR
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ELEMENTS.

4. DE STAERCKE RETURNED TO THE DATA QUESTION LATER IN THE DISCUSSION, POINTING OUT THAT THE WHOLE WESTERN POSITION CALLING FOR ASYMMETRICAL GROUND FORCE REDUCTIONS IS PUT IN QUESTION IF THE EAST CAN POINT TO WESTERN PUBLISHED TABLES WHICH SHOW SYMMETRY. PANS (ACTING SYG) POINTED OUT THAT SOME GOVERNMENTS BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULDN'T THINK THAT WE ARE IN A POSITION OF WEAKNESS IN CONVENTIONAL FORCES, BECAUSE THIS IS NOT THE CASE, AND SUCH THINKING MIGHT DISCOURAGE A SERIOUS EFFORT FOR FORCE IMPROVEMENT.

5. ADRIAESSEN SAID THE AHG WAS CONSCIOUS OF THE PROBLEM. THE ALLIES THUS FAR HAVE SEEN AN EXCHANGE OF DATA AS A WAY OF MAKING

PROGRESS IN OUR OWN CONCEPTION OF MBFR, LEADING TO A COMMON CEILING. HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE TAST WILL TRY TO TURN OUR ARGUMENTS AGAINST US. IN SOME OF THE BILATERALS, EASTERN REPRESENTATIVES HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE COMMON CEILING MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE IF THE ALLIES WOULD RECTIFY THEIR FIGURES TO SHOW THAT THERE IS NOT MUCH OF A DISPARITY IN GROUND FORCES IN THE AREA OF REDUCTIONS. THERE IS SOME QUESTION WHAT PRICE THE ALLIES SHOULD PAY FOR THAT KIND OF MBFR. DE STAERCCKE SAID THAT IT WAS EVIDENT THAT WITHOUT A DISPARITY IN GROUND FORCES IN AREA OF REDUCTIONS, THERE WOULD BE NO REASON TO USE OPTION III.

6. PANSA ASKED BEHRENDTS TO COMMENT ON BILATERAL CONVERSATIONS WHERE EASTERN REPS SAID THEY DID NOT OBJECT TO PARITY AS SUCH BUT TO THE MANNER IN WHICH IT IS APPLIED, AND WHERE THEY HINTED AT SOME EASTERN MOVEMENT AWAY FROM NATIONAL SUBB-CEILINGS.

7. BEHRENDTS REPLIED THAT THE AHG DID NOT ATTRIBUTE MUCH IMPORTANCE TO EASTERN REMARKS ON PARITY AND THE WAY IT IS APPLIED, SINCE THE EAST CLEARLY CONTINUES TO HOLD THAT THE WESTERN POSITION IS UNREALISTIC IN APPLYING PARITY TO ONLY ONE ELEMENT, GROUND FORCES. RE NATIONAL SUB-CEILINGS, HE THOUGHT THAT ALLIED ARGUMENTS AS TO WHY THEY COULD NOT ACCEPT THEM HAD MADE AN IMPRESSION ON THE EAST, AND LED THE EAST TO SURFACE A NUMBER OF ADAPTATIONS, WHICH ARE STILL UNREALISTIC.

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8. CATALANO (ITALY) ASKED IF AHG CONSIDERED THE PROBLEM OF FLANK SECURITY TO BE URGENT, AND STATED THAT ITALY DOES NOT CONSIDER IT TO BE URGENT. BEHREND'S REPLIED THAT FLANK SECURITY IS IMPORTANT, AND THAT THE AHG HAD MADE CLEAR MANY TIMES THE NEED FOR UNDIMINISHED SECURITY OF THE FLANKS. THE EAST HAS NOT CONTESTED THIS NEED. THE AHG THINKS IT BETTER NOT TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE WHILE THE PRINCIPLE IS NOT CONTESTED BY THE EAST. THUS NEW GUIDANCE IS IMPORTANT BUT NOT URGENT.

9. ERALP (TURKEY) SAID HE WAS NOT HAPPY WITH BEHREND'S REPLY. TURKEY CONSIDERS GUIDANCE TO THE AHG ON FLANK SECURITY TO BE CRITICAL AND VERY URGENT. NATO HAS MADE SOME PROGRESS ON GUIDANCE, BUT THE PROBLEM IS NOT YET SOLVED. THIS IS ONE OF THE CAPITAL POINTS IN MBFR, AND HE SAID HE WANTED TO URGE THE ALLIES REGARDING THE NEED TO MAKE PROGRESS ON THIS ISSUE. BEHREND'S SAID THAT WHEN HE STATED THAT NEW GUIDANCE WAS NOT URGENT, HE WAS REFERRING TO THE STATEMENT IN REFTEL THAT ALLIED MOVES ON THE OUTSTANDING AHG REQUESTS FOR GUIDANCE ARE IN SECRET

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THEMSELVES UNLIKELY TO MOVE THE NEGOTIATION FORWARD. HOWEVER, IT WAS URGENT FOR THE ALLIES TO SEE WHERE THEY WANT TO GO ON THESE ISSUES.

10. PECK (UK) INQUIRED ABOUT LIKELY SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARD MBFR AFTER CSCE SUMMIT. HE ALSO WONDERED IF SOVIETS MIGHT BE MORE FLEXIBLE AFTER CSCE REGARDING MBFR ASSOCIATED MEASURES.

11. BEHREND'S RESPONDED THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE WARY ABOUT INDICATING ANY ATTITUDE WHICH MIGHT IMPLY THAT CONCLUSION OF CSCE MIGHT REQUIRE THEM TO PAY A PRICE IN MBFR. REGARDING ASSOCIATED MEASURES, THE ALLIES RAISED THESE AT THE LAST INFORMAL MEETING, SUGGESTING DISCUSSION OF STABILIZING MEASURES IN CONJUNCTION WITH GENERAL PRINCIPLES. THE EAST DID NOT INDICATE ANY CHANGE IN ITS POSITION THAT ONLY ASSOCIATED MEASURES DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH REDUCTIONS WOULD BE DISCUSSED.

12. ROY (CANADA) ASKED IF THERE WERE ANY SUBJECTS WHERE THE NAC COULD MAKE EXISTING GUIDANCE MORE PRECISE, E.G. THE FIXED PERIOD BETWEEN PHASES. BEHREND'S REPLIED THAT CLEARER GUIDANCE ON THIS POINT WOULD HELP THE AHG MAKE THE CASE FOR PHASING.

13. ROY ASKED IF AHG CONSIDERED EASTERN SUGGESTIONS ABOUT A FIRST PHASE LIMITED TO STATIONED FORCES TO BE SERIOUS. BEHREND'S SAID THE AHG DID NOT ATTACH MUCH IMPORTANCE TO SUCH SUGGESTIONS, EXCEPT THAT THE RUSSIANS MIGHT PREFER AN OBJECTIVE CRITERION, SUCH AS "STATIONED FORCES" FOR PHASE I

REDUCTIONS, RATHER THAN SINGLING OUT U.S. AND USSR.

14. ROY ASKED IF THE EAST WAS MUCH MORE INTERESTED NOW IN LIMITATIONS ON EUROPEAN FORCES THAN ON REDUCTIONS BY U.S. FORCES. BEHREND'S REPLIED THAT NON-SOVIET WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES ATTACH HIGH PRIORITY TO LIMITATIONS ON EUROPEAN FORCES, AND POLES WOULD PROBABLY LIKE ALL OF THE ALLIED REDUCTIONS TO BE EUROPEAN RATHER THAN U.S.. THE SOVIETS DO WANT LIMITATIONS ON THE BUNDESWEHR, BUT THEIR PRIORITY IS NOT AS NOTICEABLE AS IN THE CASE OF THE POLES.

15. NAC TENDED TOWARD JUNE 6 AS DATE OF NEXT AHG BRIEFING, BUT THIS REMAINS SUBJECT TO LATER CONFIRMATION.

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